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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ESSY
(President of the General Assembly)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORTY-NINTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/BUR/49/1 and Add.1)

Section IV. Adoption of the agenda (continued)

Inclusion of items

Item 153

1. Mr. PAK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation was opposed to inclusion of the item in the agenda since General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) recognized the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of the people of China at the United Nations, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China must be respected.

2. Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON said that the request for inclusion was not appropriate in view of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the competent organs of the United Nations on substantive constitutional and legal grounds. Moreover the prospect of attaining a consensus on the inclusion of the item was remote.

3. Mr. SINUNGURUZA (Burundi) said that since the item had first been submitted to the General Committee at the preceding session and it had been decided to reject it no new elements had emerged that might necessitate reconsideration of the earlier position, which had been adopted on the basis of well-founded arguments. The question should not be considered in an international forum as it was for the people of China in exercise of their full sovereign rights to decide the matter.

4. Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji) said that the recent dialogue between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan was encouraging. He trusted that the cooperation between the two parties in regional institutions would serve as a basis for a lasting solution that was satisfactory to both.

5. Mr. LOPES DA ROSA (Guinea-Bissau) said that his country, in common with the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Burkina Faso, the Solomon Islands, Niger and Nicaragua, supported the proposal for inclusion of the item on the basis of Article 4 of the United Nations Charter interpreted in conjunction with Article 2, paragraph 1. Those rejecting the proposal should refer to article 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. He hoped that attitude did not represent any demonstration of hostility towards the group of countries, much less prepotency, and that it was merely an erroneous interpretation of the Charter and the rules of procedure.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Cuba had asked to participate in the discussion of item 153. While rule 43 of the rules of procedure was not applicable, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to the request.

7. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Moreno-Fernández (Cuba) took a place at the Committee table.

8. Mr. MORENO-FERNANDEZ (Cuba) said that his delegation was opposed to the inclusion of item 153 since it constituted a violation of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States - fundamental pillars of the foreign policy of his country. While, as had been stated, political circumstances might differ, that was not true of history, geography, the guiding principles of the Organization and the sources of international law, among them the resolutions of the General Assembly. General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI), which had restored the People's Republic of China to its rights at the United Nations, not only remained valid but was one of the bases of the work of the Organization. Accordingly the principle of universality could not, in the light of international law, apply in the case before the Committee, in view of which he fully supported the statement by the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Nepal had asked to participate in the discussion of item 153 in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

10. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Acharya (Nepal) took a place at the Committee table.

11. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal) said that his country supported the "one China" policy, and considered Taiwan to form part of the People's Republic of China. The General Assembly had already made its position clear, in view of which his delegation recommended that item 153 should not be included in the agenda.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Benin had asked to participate in the discussion of item 153 in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

13. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mongbé (Benin) took a place at the Committee table.

14. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) was completely unambiguous in its recognition of one China and had restored to the People's Republic of China all its rights at the Organization. It was a question which had already been decided and which affected China alone. Benin, committed to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the States Members of the United Nations, was opposed to the inclusion of the item, and recognized the validity of the prudent and unequivocal decision taken by the General Committee of the General Assembly at the forty-eighth session.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Kuwait had asked to participate in the discussion of item 153. While rule 43 of the rules of procedure was not applicable, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to the request.

16. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Al-Sabeeh (Kuwait) took a place at the Committee table.

17. Mr. AL-SABEEH (Kuwait) said that, given that Kuwait maintained relations with China as the representative of the Chinese people at the United Nations, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI), his delegation fully agreed with the views of the representative of China and supported the request for the item not to be included in the agenda for the forty-ninth session.

18. The Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 153 in the agenda.

19. Mr. Moreno-Fernández (Cuba), Mr. Acharya (Nepal), Mr. Mongbé (Benin) and Mr. Al-Sabeeh (Kuwait) withdrew.

Item 154

20. The CHAIRMAN said that the inclusion of item 154 had been requested by a group of countries listed in documents A/49/191 and Add.1. The representative of Australia had asked to participate in the discussion of item 154 in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

21. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Butler (Australia) took a place at the Committee table.

22. Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that the South Pacific Forum was a political grouping of 15 independent or self-governing States in the region which met annually at the head-of-government level to develop collective responses on a wide range of regional issues including trade, economic development, civil aviation and maritime issues, telecommunications, energy, and political and security matters. In addition the South Pacific Forum maintained a dialogue with various external Governments and organizations. The Forum was supported by a secretariat and had first been established as an international organization pursuant to the 1973 agreement establishing the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation. The Forum was seeking observer status on terms similar to those prescribed in respect of other associations of States. The request reflected the commitment by the Governments of the member States of the Forum to develop a closer relationship with the United Nations.

23. Since its inception, the Forum had played a vital role in promoting closer cooperation and consideration of a range of issues of direct relevance to the South Pacific region and beyond. The range of issues currently on its agenda were indicated in the communiqué from its most recent meeting, which had been circulated as a General Assembly document. The theme for the 1994 Forum,

"Managing our resources", encompassed the development of human resources, the management and exploitation of forestry resources, the development of fisheries and associated industries, land use concerns and their relationship to sustainable development, and the growth of tourism. The Forum had also focused on the need to adopt a global perspective in regard to the development of economic policies, the importance of environmental issues in the Pacific region, biodiversity conservation, and effective implementation in the region of the recommendations of the Programme of Action of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the Forum had been requested to work more actively in developing relations between the Forum and the United Nations, as well as with the group of countries of Asia and the Pacific and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). It had been recognized that the Forum must adapt and diversify its external relations in the light of the changes which had occurred in the international environment and must realize the potential for greater cooperation with the United Nations which it could achieve through attaining observer status.

24. In 1993, the Forum had received a copy of a statement made by the President of the Security Council on behalf of the Council in connection with its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "An agenda for peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping" (A/47/277-S/24111) in which the Security Council had invited regional organizations to consider ways and means of further improving coordination of their efforts with those of the United Nations. That statement reflected the increasing importance which was being placed on the role of regional organizations and the contribution which they could make to attaining the objectives of the United Nations Charter by working more closely within the United Nations system. The South Pacific Forum's decision to apply for observer status in the General Assembly was a positive response to that invitation.

25. The Forum also attached great importance to supporting the interests of the smaller island States. In that regard, observer status would provide an opportunity for its 15 member States to cooperate with the United Nations. Therefore, on behalf of the 40 sponsors, his delegation requested the Committee to recommend that item 154 be included in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and that the item be considered in plenary meeting.

26. Mr. Butler (Australia) withdrew.

27. Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Australia. The South Pacific Forum had developed as an expression of the desire of the Forum's leaders to formulate collective responses to a broad range of regional questions and was playing an essential role in cooperation activities in the South Pacific region and in relations with other regional bodies and organizations. It was therefore important that it should be associated with the United Nations and that a mutually beneficial relationship should be established. He therefore called on the Committee to recommend the inclusion of item 154 in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

28. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ (Ecuador) said that he supported the inclusion of item 154 in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

29. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 154 in the agenda.

Item 155

30. Mr. ROWE (Australia), introducing document A/49/192 and Add.1 on behalf of the 87 sponsors, said that the latter had been joined by Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guyana, Latvia, Macedonia, Mozambique, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Although the basis on which the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was seeking observer status in the General Assembly was contained in the explanatory memorandum in document A/49/192, the sponsors wished to draw the attention of the Committee to certain points.

31. The International Federation had been founded in 1919 and was the federation of all 162 recognized national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the world. It acted under its own Constitution with all rights and obligations of a corporate body with legal personality; its member societies represented some 125 million members and volunteers with approximately 277,000 employed staff. In accordance with its Constitution, the Federation was the official representative of its member societies in the international field and the guardian of their integrity and the protector of their interests. The functions of the Federation, which had been endorsed by States when they had adopted the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, were, inter alia, to bring relief by all available means to all disaster victims; to organize, coordinate and direct international relief actions and to assist the national societies in their disaster relief preparedness; to bring help to victims of armed conflicts, in accordance with the agreements concluded by the International Committee of the Red Cross; to encourage and promote in every country the establishment and development of an independent and duly recognized national society; and to carry out the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

32. With over 300 delegates working in 11 regional and 56 country delegations, the Federation secretariat, with the support of its member societies, which provided the major part of the funds, relief consignments and personnel, had been active throughout the world in 1994 in providing assistance to disaster victims and sustaining development programmes. The tasks of the Federation and the United Nations increasingly complemented one another and the Federation interacted with increasing frequency with bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Moreover, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement fostered close cooperation between its components both in the field and at the secretariat level. It would therefore be beneficial to the General Assembly and would increase the effectiveness of the Movement as a whole if the Federation were admitted as an observer, thereby complementing the contribution

of the International Committee of the Red Cross in terms of its different mandate, as well as know-how and operational capacity.

33. As a humanitarian organization which was involved globally, on a huge scale, in disaster relief operations as well as day-to-day health and social programmes, the Federation considered that it was important to have the opportunity to participate as an observer in the work of the General Assembly when policy on humanitarian issues was developed and discussed. Observer status with the General Assembly would be of mutual benefit to the two organizations and, above all, to disaster victims, as it would further strengthen communications and operational cooperation between the United Nations and the Federation.

34. The Federation's application had been pending for some time; in that sense, it was not a new application, and should therefore be dealt with on the basis of existing procedures and as expeditiously as had been the case with applications by other humanitarian organizations recently in the General Assembly.

35. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) said that, in accordance with the liberal policy that had been followed regarding the inclusion of items and since item 155 merited consideration, his delegation was prepared to support its inclusion in the agenda. However, because of the special nature of the organizations concerned, the item gave rise to various potentially complex questions. He felt that those questions, the implications of the item and the request contained in it must be considered carefully and thoroughly and at the same time rapidly and effectively, and that it was impossible to take a decision on the inclusion of item 155 in the agenda without considering the manner in which it should be considered. He therefore proposed that item 155 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

36. Mr. BLANDINO CANTO (Dominican Republic) said that he supported the statement by the representative of Australia and urged the Committee to recommend the inclusion of item 155 in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, bearing in mind the scope of the work carried out by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Malaysia had asked to participate in the discussion of item 155 in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

38. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Zachariah (Malaysia) took a place at the Committee table.

39. Mrs. ZACHARIAH (Malaysia) said that her delegation supported the request to grant observer status for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the General Assembly since the Federation was the only international organization in which the great majority of Governments was represented and it was governed by statutes elaborated by Governments and organizations. It therefore fully deserved the status which more than 70 countries from all regions were requesting on its behalf. Although she

shared the view of some delegations concerning the need to study future requests for the granting of observer status, she wished to recommend that the General Committee should accept the request in question and that, in addition, an open-ended working group of the General Assembly should be established to consider future requests, including requests for broadening the criteria and relevant conditions. She therefore supported the proposal that the item should be considered in plenary meeting.

40. Mrs. Zachariah (Malaysia) withdrew.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Benin had asked to participate in the debate on the item. While rule 43 of the rules of procedure did not apply, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to the request.

42. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mongbé (Benin) took a place at the Committee table.

43. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) supported the statement made by the representative of Australia and noted that his country was a sponsor of the letter requesting the granting of observer status for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the General Assembly. With regard to the proposal made by another delegation that the item should be referred to the Sixth Committee for consideration, General Assembly resolution 48/264 provided that "Agenda items which are of a nature that relates to more than one Main Committee or which do not come within the purview of any Main Committee should be considered by the General Assembly in plenary meeting, taking into account the recommendations of the General Committee". He therefore saw no reason why the item should be referred to a specific Committee for consideration, since it was within the purview of the plenary Assembly.

44. Mr. Mongbé (Benin) withdrew.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Burkina Faso had asked to participate in the debate on the item, in conformity with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

46. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) took a place at the Committee table.

47. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that his delegation shared the concern which had been expressed over the possibility that observer status in the General Assembly might be granted too hastily to all organizations requesting it. It would be better to establish a procedure for determining the manner in which observer status would be granted and the criteria for doing so. That notwithstanding, in Burkina Faso the Red Cross referred to a network of mutual and emergency assistance operating throughout the national territory and staffed by deeply dedicated volunteers and collaborators. The same network of solidarity extended beyond the national frontiers and provided a glimpse of what the international community should be like. His delegation therefore supported

the inclusion of item 155 in the agenda of the General Assembly and its consideration in plenary meeting, if only because of the humanitarian and profoundly regenerative activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

48. Mr. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) withdrew.

49. Mr. HUDYMA (Ukraine) said that his country was a sponsor of the letter requesting the inclusion of item 155 in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and was of the view that the item should be considered in plenary meeting. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was a unique organization whose members had been entrusted with public responsibilities that derived, first and foremost, from international treaties of universal application, including the 1949 Geneva Convention. The competence and special attributes of the Federation had been recognized in several resolutions of the General Assembly; the Federation had a broad mandate to provide assistance to the victims of conflicts and disasters and to prevent and mitigate suffering. A large number of issues currently before the United Nations were relevant to the activities of the Federation and closer cooperation, particularly in the humanitarian field, between the two organizations would be mutually beneficial.

50. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) supported the request for the granting of observer status for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the General Assembly having regard to the large number of national societies which were members of that organization and the scope of its activities in the humanitarian field, and, in particular, in preventing disasters and relieving victims' suffering. Given the large number of Member States which had supported the request, he wished to suggest that the item should be considered in plenary meeting.

51. Mr. YASSIN (Sudan) said that his country was among the 78 sponsors of the letter requesting the granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which was a unique international organization providing assistance to thousands of needy people. In 1994, the organization had provided assistance to more than 19 million people throughout the world and the delegation of the Sudan therefore supported the statements made by the delegations of Malaysia and Benin to the effect that the item should not be referred to the Sixth Committee for consideration.

52. Mr. SINUNGURUZA (Burundi) said that his delegation supported those delegations which had requested the granting of observer status for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the General Assembly and that, on the instructions of his Government, he wished to request that Burundi should be considered a sponsor of document A/49/192 and Add.1. In explanation of his position, he wished to point out that the Red Cross had undertaken noteworthy activities which deserved full support, particularly in the developing countries, including Burundi. He therefore supported the statements made by those delegations which were in favour of the inclusion of

the item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and of its consideration in plenary meeting.

53. Mr. HALFF (Netherlands) said that various requests had recently been made for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly and that in most cases, those requests had been granted without further discussion and without more careful consideration of the benefit that would accrue to the United Nations. The request for the granting of observer status to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was a good example of a case in which not all the political and legal aspects were fully clear. He therefore supported the inclusion of the item in question in the agenda of the General Assembly, but for the time being only in order to permit more in-depth consideration of all its political and legal aspects. In his delegation's view, the most appropriate body for undertaking that task would be not the plenary Assembly but rather the Sixth Committee, to which the item should therefore be referred in the first instance.

54. Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) said that his delegation fully supported the reasons which motivated the request for the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies organized and coordinated a tremendous effort of humanitarian assistance at times of natural disasters and armed conflicts. That noble activity was well known thanks to the explanatory notes contained in document A/49/192 and to the cooperation which his country maintained with that organization. While his delegation was not opposed in principle to the inclusion of the item in the agenda, it would prefer the item to be given in-depth consideration. In that respect, it supported those delegations which had suggested that the time was ripe to systematize the approach to be followed in resolving problems of that nature. He therefore supported the proposal that the item should be considered in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly.

55. Mr. MWAUNGULU (Malawi) said that, as a sponsor of the proposal, his delegation fully supported the proposal to include item 155 in the agenda. It also considered it necessary to establish criteria for the appropriate consideration of future requests for the granting of observer status for other non-governmental organizations in the General Assembly.

56. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ (Ecuador) said that his delegation supported the inclusion of the item in the manner originally proposed by the drafters of the request, in other words, that it should be considered directly by the General Assembly in plenary meeting.

57. Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji) said that as one of the sponsors of the request for the inclusion of the item in the agenda, his delegation supported the request for the granting of observer status. With respect to the proposal that the item should be referred to the Sixth Committee before being taken up in the plenary, he would not object to applying that procedure to all such requests provided that, in the case under discussion, it were not used to delay the granting of the observer status.

58. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) said that his delegation had been instructed to support the proposal to include the item in the agenda as formulated by the delegation of Australia, which implied consideration of the item in the plenary. At the same time, he was aware of the difficulties that might arise if entities which were not as important or did not enjoy the same international standing as the Federation were all to request observer status. For that reason, he supported the proposal to establish criteria for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Canada had asked to participate in the discussion of item 155 in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

60. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Baillargeon (Canada) took a place at the Committee table.

61. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that his delegation, like many others, felt that the time had come to establish a set of criteria to facilitate the selection process in the future. The criteria should be drawn up by the Sixth Committee or another body but only after addressing the long-standing request of the Federation, under the existing procedure - the same procedure as that applied in granting observer status to the South Pacific Forum should apply to the Federation. New criteria would be applied to future requests. Moreover, the special case of the Federation and its unique nature, which had been underscored by a number of delegations, should serve as a guideline for developing criteria sufficiently restrictive so as not to undermine the status of permanent observer. His delegation hoped that the case of the Federation would be considered as soon as possible in plenary without prejudice to having the question of criteria discussed in the Sixth Committee or in another forum.

62. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) withdrew.

63. Mr. LOPES DA ROSA (Guinea-Bissau) said that his delegation supported the view of previous speakers that item 155 should be included in the agenda and should be considered directly in the plenary.

64. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Sweden had asked to participate in the discussion of item 155 in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

65. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Rydberg (Sweden) took a place at the Committee table.

66. Mr. RYDBERG (Sweden) said that he supported the proposal to include the item in the agenda of the General Assembly for the reasons clearly stated by the representative of Australia. His delegation was also of the view that the item should be considered in the plenary in accordance with the established practice

for the granting to organizations of observer status in the General Assembly. He hoped that item 160 would also be included in the agenda.

67. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 155 in the agenda.

68. Mr. Rydberg (Sweden) withdrew.

Item 156

69. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that the inclusion of this item in the agenda was a wise initiative given the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction which was one of the effective non-proliferation instruments, and was a step fostering the inclusion of other universal disarmament treaties.

70. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 156 in the agenda.

Item 157

71. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 157 in the agenda.

Item 158

72. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 158 in the agenda.

Item 159

73. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 159 in the agenda.

Item 160

74. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) said that recent General Assembly decisions and the item just included in the agenda were likely to raise problems with regard to the criteria to be applied for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly. For example, the excellent record of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies did not change the non-governmental nature of that organization or of other such worthy organizations. His delegation wished to reaffirm its support for certain criteria applied over the years by the General Assembly. The South Pacific Forum was an example of an organization that satisfied the current criteria and therefore the item could be considered directly in the plenary. However, it was neither the time nor place to go into detailed discussions of the issue. If the existing criteria were not reaffirmed and new criteria were not drawn up, there would be no basis for granting or denying observer status to organizations that so requested. That could affect the functioning of the General Assembly and

jeopardize the privileges currently enjoyed by observers. Moreover, there was the risk that the process provided for by resolution 1279 of the Economic and Social Council might be weakened. His delegation felt that the question of new criteria should be considered as a matter of urgency reasonably soon and that the existing criteria should be retained; it also supported the allocation of the item to the Sixth Committee.

75. Mr. LEGAL (France) said that the recent increase in the number of applications for observer status in the General Assembly made it necessary to conduct an in-depth review of the institutional and practical consequences that the granting of such status would have on certain non-governmental organizations. While there were no criteria governing the matter, his delegation felt that the granting of observer status was, with few exceptions, reserved for intergovernmental organizations since the representation of non-governmental organizations was within the province of the Economic and Social Council. Nevertheless, many non-governmental organizations were now requesting observer status in the General Assembly. The requests put forward sound arguments and were made by bodies that enjoyed a wide following. In the circumstances, if the General Assembly considered the applications on a case-by-case basis, it might find itself facing a situation that it had not bargained for. Therefore, it had become necessary to consider the possible institutional consequences of granting observer status in the various United Nations organs. His delegation therefore wished to propose that the Committee should recommend the inclusion of a new item entitled "Question of criteria for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly". Naturally, the requests under consideration would have to be reviewed according to existing procedures since the case had not been made for proceeding otherwise.

76. Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) said that his delegation's position on the question of granting observer status to non-governmental organizations in the General Assembly was well known. As a rule, non-governmental organizations wishing to associate themselves with the activities of the United Nations had to do so in accordance with the rules governing the granting of consultative status before the Economic and Social Council. The General Assembly of the United Nations should continue to be an intergovernmental body. In the past, his delegation had expressed the view that any exceptions had to be made on the basis of very rigorous criteria. Nevertheless, he welcomed the United States proposal to develop such criteria and supported the inclusion of the item in the agenda in the hope that exceptions would be kept to a minimum rather than open the door for non-governmental organizations to obtain observer status in the General Assembly.

77. Mr. HALFF (Netherlands) said that his delegation supported the opinions expressed by the representative of the United States and was gratified by his proposal for the inclusion in the agenda of the item concerning the criteria for granting observer status and for assigning it to the Sixth Committee.

78. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that he supported the proposal of the representative of the United States that the Sixth Committee consider developing

criteria for granting observer status to non-governmental organizations which might make that request in future.

79. Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) observed that non-governmental organizations had requested observer status during the past few years and that the General Assembly had made several exceptions to the general rule that such status be granted only to States and to intergovernmental organizations. His delegation felt that no more such exceptions should be made, as they could adversely affect the status of observer. If non-governmental organizations were interested in the activities of the United Nations, the appropriate forum for the expression of such interest would be another organ like the Economic and Social Council, for which there was an established procedure. In this respect he supported the proposal of the representative of the United States that criteria be established for the granting of that status.

80. The General Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 160 in the agenda.

Session V. Allocation of items

Paragraph 46

81. The CHAIRMAN noted that in paragraph 46 the Secretary-General had informed the General Committee that the allocation of items had been carried out on the basis of the pattern adopted by the General Assembly in previous years. Moreover, as was suggested in paragraph 46, the General Committee also wished to draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 4 of its decision 34/401, according to which substantive items should normally be discussed initially by a Main Committee and, therefore, items previously allocated to plenary meetings should thenceforth be referred to a Main Committee unless there were compelling circumstances requiring their continued consideration in plenary meeting.

82. The General Committee decided to draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 4 of its decision 34/401.

83. The CHAIRMAN observed that in paragraph 46, the Secretary-General had drawn the attention of the General Committee to paragraph 5 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 39/88 B, which recommended that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should take the initiative, in the light of past experience, to propose the grouping of similar or related items and the holding of a single general debate on them, as well as to paragraph 6 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 45/45, which recommended that the General Committee should ensure the best use of the expertise of the Committees in making recommendations as to how agenda items should be allocated to the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly.

84. In the same paragraph 46 of his memorandum, the Secretary-General also drew the General Committee's attention to paragraphs 2 and 5 (b) and (d) of annex I of General Assembly resolution 48/264, which said that agenda items that were of

a nature that related to more than one Main Committee or which did not come within the purview of any Main Committee should be considered by the General Assembly in plenary meeting, taking into account the recommendations of the General Committee, and that the Main Committees be encouraged to continue with the review of their respective agendas, with items covering related matters or issues being considered in groups, and maintaining the existing broad division of work among the Main Committees.

Paragraph 47

85. The CHAIRMAN drew the General Committee's attention to seven items of the draft agenda not previously considered by the General Assembly, and invited the General Committee to decide what recommendations it wished to make with regard to the allocation of those items.

86. The General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 150 be allocated to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

87. The General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that items 151, 152 and 154 be considered directly in plenary meeting.

88. The CHAIRMAN noted that the sponsors of item 155 had proposed that it be considered directly in the plenary. However, the representative of the United States had proposed that item 155 be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

89. Mr. LEGAL (France) said that, in the opinion of his delegation, observer status was reserved in principle for intergovernmental organizations, since the Economic and Social Council was the body responsible for recognizing non-governmental organizations as consultative entities. The two exceptions that had been made to that principle involved very special circumstances: one was that of the International Committee of the Red Cross, an organization with very close ties to the United Nations in performing humanitarian operations, and the other was that of an organization with which many States members had relations which they characterized as diplomatic, thereby conferring a completely special character upon that organization.

90. In principle, France did not object to having the General Assembly consider the request presented by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, although it considered that granting observer status to that Federation should initiate an overall review of the consequences for the United Nations of a considerable increase in the number of observers, and particularly of observers that were non-governmental organizations. Such an increase would be hard to avoid if there was no objection in principle to the granting of observer status to such organizations in the General Assembly. Leaving aside the matter of whether or not such an increase was desirable, his delegation felt that the question of the institutional implications should at least be raised.

91. Furthermore, his delegation was in favour of allocating consideration of the request presented by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red

Crescent Societies to the Sixth Committee. That Committee would then have a good opportunity to examine the general and practical consequences of the position adopted by the General Assembly regarding the granting of observer status, and to present the Assembly with a soundly reasoned recommendation on the matter. Moreover, no compelling circumstances had been mentioned in connection with item 155 that would justify it being considered in the plenary in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4 of Assembly decision 34/401.

92. Ms. WILMSHURST (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) reiterated her country's position that the General Assembly should consider extremely carefully the principles upon which the granting of observer status to non-governmental organizations were to be based. Before considering new requests from non-governmental organizations, fundamental decisions would have to be adopted regarding the criteria applicable in such cases. As had been previously indicated in the meeting, the General Assembly had established the practice of granting observer status only to States and intergovernmental organizations, with the two special exceptions that had been referred to previously.

93. The excellent reputation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was known to all, but there were many other non-governmental organizations that had also done remarkable work. More than 370 non-governmental organizations had been recognized as deserving consultative status by the Economic and Social Council. It was fair to ask whether there was enough space and sufficient resources to accept so large a number of organizations as observers in the General Assembly.

94. Since the Committee had decided that the new item 160, proposed by the United States, should be included in the agenda and allocated to the Sixth Committee, the United Kingdom was in favour of allocating item 155 to the same Committee, where due attention could be given to all aspects, both institutional and legal, of the granting of observer status.

95. Mr. HALFF (Netherlands) supported the proposal to allocate item 155 to the Sixth Committee.

96. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Finland had asked to participate in the discussion of item 155, in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

97. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Salmi (Finland) took a place at the Committee table.

98. Mr. SALMI (Finland) said that item 155 should be considered directly in plenary meeting, bearing in mind the special character of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In his delegation's opinion, enough arguments and justifications had already been put forward for a decision to be made on the Federation's request for observer status, and it was

unnecessary to allocate the item to a Main Committee before it was considered in plenary meeting.

99. Mr. Salmi (Finland) withdrew.

100. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said his delegation disagreed with the request from the United States, France and the United Kingdom for item 155 to be allocated to the Sixth Committee. He recalled that the 87 Member States which had sponsored that item's inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly supported the request that it should be considered directly in plenary meeting, and that the majority opinion should be respected in order to maintain the democratic character of the deliberations.

101. Mr. ROWE (Australia) said that his delegation supported the position expressed by the representative of Benin. The allocation of item 155 to the Sixth Committee could delay the adoption of a decision on the subject. Australia understood the need to consider the criteria which governed the granting of observer status in the General Assembly; that was why it had supported the United States request for item 160 to be included in the agenda of the General Assembly. However, his delegation considered that a distinction should be made between the specific request before the Committee concerning the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and any future requests from other organizations for the granting of observer status.

102. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) reiterated his delegation's belief that item 155 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee for consideration in the context of the review of the criteria for granting observer status in the Assembly. It would still be possible for those questions to be examined quickly and efficiently and resolved before the end of the current session.

103. Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) proposed that item 155 should be considered directly in plenary meeting, but on the understanding that that would be done once the Sixth Committee had considered item 160 and had formulated specific recommendations regarding the criteria for granting observer status in the Assembly.

104. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) said his delegation would accept the Indian delegation's proposal as a compromise solution.

105. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said his delegation rejected the Indian proposal and reiterated the position of the sponsors of item 155 that it should be considered directly in plenary meeting. That consideration should not have to wait until the Sixth Committee had examined item 160. He emphasized once more that 87 Member States had recommended that item 155 should be considered in plenary meeting; the Committee should respect that majority's wishes.

106. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) said that if the Indian proposal still stood, the Committee would have to make a decision on it. In that case, as his delegation had previously stated, the United States would be prepared to

accept it as a compromise solution. However, if the proposal was withdrawn as a result of the objection expressed by the representative of Benin, his delegation reiterated that item 155 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

107. Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) said that his delegation supported the Indian proposal and proposed that the Committee should put it to a vote.

108. Mr. YASSIN (Sudan) proposed that a vote should be taken to decide whether item 155 should be considered in plenary meeting or allocated to the Sixth Committee. He considered that there was no difference between the Indian proposal and the United States proposal that item 155 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

109. The CHAIRMAN said that, before a vote was held as a last resort, the Committee should try to reach a consensus.

110. Mr. LEGAL (France) recalled that, precisely because the Committee's deliberations must be of a democratic nature, the fact that 87 Member States supported a particular proposal did not mean that another group of countries could not express its opinion on the subject. France insisted on presenting its position, without desiring to impose it, and was not opposed to the holding of a vote.

111. His delegation considered that the Indian proposal was reasonable and should not be construed as a delaying measure, since the Sixth Committee would be able to consider item 155 quickly. No valid argument had been put forward to show that there was any particular urgency to the request from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, so he did not think the Federation's activities would be disrupted if the General Assembly took a few weeks to give careful consideration to that delicate question.

112. Ms. WILMSHURST (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said she understood the concern felt by the sponsors of item 155 that the adoption of a decision on the subject might be delayed if the item should be referred to the Sixth Committee. Her delegation therefore proposed that, in the wording of the Indian proposal, it should also be clearly stated that a decision must be adopted during the current session of the General Assembly.

113. Mr. ROWE (Australia), praising the Chairman's efforts to find a solution to the problem, added that he would be unable to give an immediate response because he would have to consult with the other sponsors.

The meeting was suspended at 5.30 p.m. and resumed at 5.40 p.m.

114. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should postpone its decision regarding the allocation of item 155 to give the sponsors more time for consultations.

115. It was so decided.

Paragraph 47

116. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsor of item 160 had proposed that it should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

117. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 160 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

Paragraph 48

118. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the proposals in paragraph 48 of the Secretary-General's memorandum relating to item 12.

119. The CHAIRMAN said that in paragraph 48, also in connection with item 12, the Secretary-General referred to Economic and Social Council decision 1994/285 of 26 July 1994, regarding the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund.

120. The Committee decided to recommend that the commemoration should take place on Thursday, 20 October 1994.

Paragraph 49

121. The Committee decided, with regard to item 18, to recommend to the General Assembly that all the chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to specific Territories should be referred to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and that the Assembly would deal in plenary meeting with the question of the implementation of the Declaration as a whole.

Paragraph 50

122. The Committee decided to recommend that, as at previous sessions, item 45 should be considered directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that organizations and individuals having an interest in the question would be heard in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in conjunction with its consideration in plenary meeting.

Paragraph 51

123. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 51 should be allocated at an appropriate time during the session.

Paragraph 52

124. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the paragraphs of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency dealing with the subject-matter of item 63 should be drawn to the attention of the First Committee in connection with its consideration of that item.

Paragraph 53

125. Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) proposed that the Committee should defer its decision on the allocation of item 94 to allow the Group of 77 the opportunity to consider the views of some of the developing countries on the matter.

126. It was so decided.

Paragraph 54

127. The Committee decided to recommend that the plenary meetings to be devoted to activities relating to the International Year of the Family should be held on Tuesday, 18 October 1994.

128. The CHAIRMAN said, with regard to the Committee's earlier decision to recommend that sub-item (c) of item 90 entitled "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development" should become a separate item, that the representative of Pakistan had proposed that the item should be allocated to the Second Committee, but that it should be introduced in plenary meeting.

129. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item entitled "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development" should be introduced in plenary meeting, on the understanding that action on that item would be taken in the Second Committee.

Paragraph 55

130. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration in plenary meeting, including the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Population Fund, the special plenary meetings devoted to An Agenda for Development, the two plenary meetings concerning the additional activities relating to the International Year of the Family and the discussion of the report of the International Conference on Population and Development, and including items 151, 152, 154, 157 and 159, but excluding item 51 (Question of Cyprus), bearing in mind that it had postponed a decision on item 155 (Observer status for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the General Assembly), should be allocated to the plenary Assembly.

Items proposed for consideration by the First Committee

131. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the First Committee, including item 156, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Second Committee

132. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Second Committee, including a separate item entitled "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development", should be allocated to that Committee, bearing in mind that item 94 would be considered at the next meeting of the General Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Third Committee

133. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Third Committee should be allocated to that Committee.

134. Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Centre for Human Rights, proposed that a half-day plenary meeting at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly should be devoted to item 12 allocated to that Committee, for the launching of the activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The half day being requested should be as close as possible to 10 December 1994, the date on which the Decade would begin.

135. The CHAIRMAN said that he would hold consultations with the various services concerning the organization of the proposed special meeting.

Items proposed for consideration by the Fourth Committee

136. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Fourth Committee, including item 150, taking into account its decisions on the items entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India" and "Question of East Timor", should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Fifth Committee

137. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Fifth Committee, including item 158, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Sixth Committee

138. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Sixth Committee, including item 160 (Question of criteria for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly), should be allocated to that Committee.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.